

TOP SECRET

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600100015-5

25X1

9 March 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Photo Reconnaissance Capabilities in the North Vietnam/
China Border Area

1. Two factors must be considered regarding photographic reconnaissance in the North Vietnam/China border area. Weather is a very important limiting factor since heavy cloud cover during much of the year precludes good quality photography from high level reconnaissance. An equally important factor is that no aircraft can overfly China without 40 Committee approval.
2. To acquire coverage inside China it is necessary to overfly China at some point, even if the aircraft is flying a course parallel to but south of the border. This is especially true with the SR-71 because of its high speed and wide turning radius. There is little possibility that the SR-71 will be allowed to fly over Communist China. An alternate means of obtaining the desired photo coverage is the use of the U-2 R for overflights of China. This, of course, also requires 40 Committee approval.
3. The SR-71's are currently authorized by the 40 Committee to fly ten missions per month over northern North Vietnam, but seldom is this number flown due to the adverse weather conditions in that area. On 1 March an SR-71 flew this northern orbit and on 7 March an SR-71 flew a mission over northern Laos. No SR-71 flights are scheduled in the northern area for the next 24 hours.
4. Other alternate means of photographic coverage in this area are via satellite -- no KH-4 satellite coverage will be possible until after 24 March -- and drone. The normal drones in use in this area only give spotting coverage and have been primarily utilized south of

25X1

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600100015-5

Copy No. *215*

25X1

Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

TOP SECRET [REDACTED]

25X1

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600100015-5

22°. Two Tagboard, long range high speed drones, missions have been flown over China but both have failed on recovery. These assets can be tasked on short notice and 17 of them are available. Based on their performance to date, however, this does not appear to be a practical approach to the problem.

[REDACTED]
Vietnamese Affairs Staff

25X1

- 2 -

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600100015-5

TOP SECRET [REDACTED]

cluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

Copy No. 25

25X1

25X1

TOP SECRET

25X1

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600100015-5

10 March 1971

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT : Requirements for Photographic Coverage
of South China

1. The following targets, if covered on a regular basis with adequate photographic resolution, are those most likely to provide indications of Chinese Communist military activities related to Indochina. In order to identify types of military equipment and provide an accurate count of transportation vehicles, ground resolution should be on the order of three feet or better.

2. The first priority targets are:

a. Chang-chiang (21-12N 110-23E). A naval headquarters, rail terminus and transshipment point for military supplies to North Vietnam.

b. Ping-hsiang (22-04N 106-44E). A transportation center and rail crossing point into North Vietnam.

c. Hokou (22-30N 103-58E). A border transportation center for rail and road traffic into North Vietnam.

d. Ssu-mao (22-47N 100-59E). A transportation center for military traffic into northwest Laos.

e. Ning-ming (22-08N 107-04E). A tactical airbase and transportation center.

f. Meng-tzu (22-22N 103-24E). A military staging area and tactical airbase near the North Vietnamese border.

This memorandum was prepared by the Office of Strategic Research and coordinated within the Directorate of Intelligence and with the Directorate of Plans.

25X1

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600100015-5

TOP SECRET

25X1

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600100015-5

3. Targets of second priority include:

a. Nan-ning (22-49N 108-19E). A transportation center and military headquarters for the region. (An active SA-2 site was located near Nan-ning in 1969. This site has not been observed since.)

b. Meng-la (21-30N 101-33E). A military staging area near the Laotian border.

c. Kun-ming (25-04N 102-41E). A transportation center and military headquarters for the region.

4. Coverage of the above targets would provide information on the status of major military installations and transportation facilities adjacent to North Vietnam. It would also indicate levels of supply activity and the status of major troop deployments. Because of the absence of recent photographic coverage, however, a single mission would not enable us to detect dynamics of movement or of activity. Repeated coverage over time would enable us to establish an intelligence base against which to detect divisional movements and major changes in the level of supply activity. We could not be certain, however, of detecting the infiltration of smaller units and quantities of supplies into North Vietnam.

5. Increased coverage of transportation centers and military staging areas within North Vietnam could also provide evidence of Chinese Communist military assistance to Indochina. A better photographic base exists for targets in North Vietnam, and coverage of this area could be done on a regular basis with less risk than similar coverage of China entails. Targets in this area should include facilities where Chinese Communist forces previously were located, particularly along the major lines of communication in the northwest and northeast which connect with major transport arteries in China.

25X1

TOP SECRET

Approved For Release 2004/12/02 : CIA-RDP80R01720R000600100015-5

25X1